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# Edwards Mayor.

*Jovis Quarto die Septembris 1679. Annoq;  
Regni Regis Caroli Secundi Angliæ,  
&c. XXXI.*

This Court doth desire Mr. *Hesketh* to  
Print his Sermon, preached at *Guild-  
Hall Chappel*, before the LORD MAYOR  
and Aldermen, on the second of this  
instant *September*, being the day of  
Humiliation for the dismal Fire in the  
Year 1666.

*Wagstaffe.*

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A  
SERMON

Preached before the Right Honorable

The Lord Mayor

AND

ALDERMEN

OF

LONDON,

AT

GUILD-HALL CHAPPEL,

*Upon the Second of September, 1679.*

Being the day of their Humiliation in  
Memory of the late dreadful Fire.

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By HENRY HESKETH Rector of *Charlewood* in *Surrey*,  
and Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

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L O N D O N :

Printed by *A. Godbid*, and *J. Playford*, for *Will. Leach*, at the  
*Crown* in *Cornhill*, near the *Royal-Exchange*, 1679.

SERMON

THE

ADDRESSES

IN

CHURCH

ON

THE



To the Right Honourable  
Sir JAMES EDWARDS  
LORD MAYOR of LONDON:

And to the  
Honourable Court of ALDERMEN.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,



When I first received your Commands  
for the publishing of this Discourse,  
I dare not say, but that I did secretly  
rejoice: But not upon those vain  
Reasons that perhaps some may invidiously suppose,  
but only that I had hopes thereby given me, that the  
Truths therein were as favourably entertained, as  
(I am sure) they were honestly intended, and  
therefore the more likely to have some good effect  
upon them that heard them.

I am very sensible, both how meanly they were  
delivered, and how homely worded, but, my Lord,

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

*Your acceptance supplies both those Defects. And if they may in any little measure promote the great Ends of Preaching, and be serviceable to any in the Purposes of Religion, but especially if they may induce this City to pursue the Methods to Honour and Safety, and to Divine Protection, the great Ensurer of both, I shall have great cause to rejoice in my labour, and bless God for the Success of it. In humble hopes of which, I shall instantly address to him, who can give all these Effects, and who is always ready and forward to do so, even God Almighty: Who that he may still continue his Mercies and Compassions to this City, is and shall be the Prayer of,*

*Right Honourable,*

*Your most obliged and obedient Servant,*

HENRY HESKETH.

L A M.

[ 1 ]

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L A M. 3. 22.

*It is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not consumed, and because his Compassions fail not.*

**I**T is the Duty of Man to rejoice before the Lord with reverence, to mix humility with his Eucharists, and to contemper his Joy in Divine Mercy with seriousness and fear.

And it is his happiness that he may do something like this in his most solemn Mournings. The Causes of Man's Humiliation and Sorrow are very rarely pure and unmixed, but Mercy mingleth it self with his Judgments, and the Sun shines even in the midst of the Shower: Even in the Valley of Action, there is a Door of Hope; and some Cause of Joy, when there is so of Mourning.

And a great part of Man's Wisdom consists in this, in knowing how rightly to contemper these two; neither so rejoicing

rejoicing, as to become vain; nor sorrowing  
so, as without hope.

Men may rejoice in God's Kindness, even when they mourn under the Effects of his Wrath, and when they mostly lament their own Misery: They may joy in Divine Mercy, when they humble themselves under a sense of their own great Demerits; they may yet rejoice that their Misery is not answerable to them; and when they mourn the most deeply, considering how they deserve to be consumed, they may triumph to think they are not so.

This was the condition of this People, when the Prophet composed this *Genyodion*; and therefore amongst their most passionate Lamentations, there are ever now and then interspersed Expressions of Praise.

And it is no unpleasant Reflection to consider, That in this ours also nearly resembles it. We have been brought into the Fiery Furnace by our Sins, but we have been brought also out of it by

Divine Mercy. The Fire hath kindled upon us to high degrees; but we have been plucked as a Fire-brand out of it. We have been brought down even to the grave; but we have been brought up again from it. The Judgment threaten'd to destroy us utterly, but it did not. We were near being consumed, but we were not so.

In these Circumstances, I cannot but think it will concern us, to reflect equally upon both these Conditions, that we may order our Sacrifice according to the Exigents of both; mingle Incense with our Trespas-offering, and put Honey into our bitter Herbs, confess our many great Sins, that we may be humbled, and consider God's greater Mercies, that we may be exalted. It was those that brought us into danger; it was these that brought us out of it.

And therefore I do not know a more becoming Service for this Day, than to give Glory to God in both Cases; in the one, by acknowledging our Sins,  
 B and

and the justness of his Wrath; in the other, by giving the Praise of our Deliverance only to his Mercy. And to our Recognitions of his Mercies, that we were not consumed, add our Prayers, and humbly implore the continuance of the same; that as we have tasted them, so we may still; that as his Compassions have not, so they never may fail towards us.

In which Words, there are two Things chiefly observable.

*First*, Something plainly supposed, or implied, and that is, That they were very near being wholly consumed, and justly might have been so.

*Secondly*, Something plainly expressed, and that is, That they were not consumed, and that it was only of Divine Mercy that they were not.

I do not forget that this is designed for a Fast, and a Day of Humiliation, and therefore I take notice of the first; and I cannot but observe how God hath turned our weeping into joy, and there-  
fore



fore cannot but observe the latter. They are both now happily complicated in our Circumstances, and to consider duly of both, will make a very meet Service for this Day.

In speaking to the first, I shall only offer at three Things :

I. A little refresh your Memory, in calling your Thoughts to the Consideration of our Judgment and Danger, *almost consumed.*

II. Suggest how *just* and *deserved* it was.

III. Press the *sober* Memory of it, according to this Days pious Designation.

In speaking to the latter, I shall offer at three Things too.

I. Consider our happy Rescue from this Consumption, *we are not consumed.*

II. Enquire to what we owe our Recognitions for it, *Gods Mercies.*

III. Search by what Methods these Mercies, and these Deliverances, (the Effects of them) may be assured still unto us, *not to fail.*



Which things I suppose will well enough answer the Design of this Day, and the Purport of this Text.

I. I begin with the first General, and therein with the first thing proposed, the Intimation of the Danger we were in, *almost consumed*. This is sufficiently implied in this Recognition, and answerable to our common way of speaking in the like cases: When we would express a great Danger, we commonly say, *Without God's great Mercy we had perished*. We were in a fair way to destruction, and very near it, and nothing but God's gracious, and powerful Interposition could rescue us from it.

That we were indeed so, we need not (one would think) to be told, nor indeed can we well stand in need of a Remembrancer. Thirteen Years (one would think) could not so efface the Impression, nor wear off the Sense of so stupendious a Judgment, that there should now be any great need, either of refreshing our Memory, or renewing our Apprehension thereof.

But

But because Vanity is apt to steal up on the Minds of Men, and the most important things soonest pass from us, it cannot be more needless, than (I am sure) it is unconducting, to represent something of this now to the Considerations of Men.

I must have leave therefore a little to renew your Sorrows, and call you to the repetition of your sad Reflexions. I must beg you a little while to impregnate your Fancies, with fresh Idea's of the late dreadful and amazing Conflagration. It is one part of the Business of this Day, and to what good purposes it may conduce, you shall hear in part, by and by.

A Judgment so extremely terrible, as to be equally effective of Astonishment and Grief. A Misery above the reach of common Sorrows, and fitter to be entertained with horror, and amazement, and silence.

Had an Orator this Theme, and would give himself scope to expatiate on it, how easily might he represent it to those heights

heights of Terror, and dress it up in such  
dismal colours, as might amaze, and  
drown in tears a tender Auditor.

Lord, to what extreme degrees did  
thine Anger then burn like Fire! and  
how lively a Preludium was it of thy  
great Appearance in Wrath, and of the  
final Conflagration! How did all the  
Tribes of this great City mourn, and  
how did blackness and horror sit in all  
Faces! How did the Heavens look red  
with thine Indignation, and how did  
the Elements melt with Heat of thy  
Wrath!

How did that worst of Masters then  
tyrannize over us, and how did the best  
of Servants degenerate into the cruellest  
of Rebels! How did it triumph over  
all restraints, and scorn all oppositions  
made against it! In what a little time  
did it bring down the Glory of one of  
the Considerablest Cities on Earth, and  
lay its Honour in the Dust.

How did the stately Turrets fall, and  
the beautiful Palaces sink into Confusi-  
on!

on! Nay, how (O Lord) did thine own Portions fall too! and how afflictive a Symptom was it, that thou wouldst no more be intreated, since thou left us no places to supplicate thee in! How justly might the Prophet compose for us a *second Lamentation*, and how easily might he outdo all the doleful Accents in the former!

How did the *delicate City lie among the pots* and how was the *Beauty of the Earth* buried in Ashes! How did she, that afore-time was filled with Troops, now sit alone, and she that was Queen of the Earth remain desolate and unattended! How was the *faithful City* become more deformed than an Harlot, and how *instead of Righteousness there was a Cry*! How were the Chambers of the Daughters of Israel become Habitations only of Monsters and Dragons, and how well might the filthy Satyrs dance there!

How was she, whom Kings of the Earth admir'd for her Riches and Beauty, become now her own amazement and wonder! How did those that had *known her*,  
know

[ 10 ]  
know her no more, and how strange was she be-  
come even to her own Children! and she  
that aforetime was the Joy of the Earth,  
now become the Sorrow and Hatred of  
her own Sons!

But I must forbear, and not extort  
Blood instead of Tears: I must not kill,  
when I would only wound, nor grow  
cruel in sporting with these Miseries. I  
only desire a *sober remembrance* of these  
things, and not to bring us really to re-  
act our former transports. I would not  
have these things forgotten, and I but  
comply with the Institution of this Day,  
in recounting them again, that they  
may not.

II. And therefore now pass on to a  
second afflictive Consideration, (for yet  
I must detain you in the dismal Prospect)  
and that is to consider how *just* all this  
was; for the Almighty (saith the Pro-  
phet in this Chapter) doth not *causelessly*  
*afflict*, nor *willingly grieve the Children of Men*.  
And indeed a little Enquiry will soon  
satisfie us, that in this he did not.

If



If any Man therefore ask as they did ;  
*Jer. 22. 8. Wherefore hath the Lord done this to  
 this great City ?* the Prophet there furnish-  
 eth me with an Answer, *Because they have  
 forsaken the Covenant of the Lord their God, and  
 worshipped other Gods, and served them ; i. e. in  
 plain English, they have sinned against  
 their God, they have contemned his  
 Laws, and by their Transgressions they  
 have brought upon themselves this De-  
 struction.*

And for God's sake my Brethren how  
 justly might such an Answer be made  
 in our Case ! and how well might God's  
 Judgments against us be justified upon  
 the Reasons of it ! I would much rather  
 Men's own Thoughts should speak, than  
 force me to become their Accuser.

I know it is an invidious Task, to re-  
 count the Sins of a great Body of Men,  
 and I do not delight to rake into the  
 Imperfections of my Brethren. It is  
 not an acceptable performance, to go  
 to convince Men of their Sins, but yet  
 it is necessary that they see them. I do

C

not

not therefore desire to become your Confessor at this time, nor would I publish our shame to the insulting of our Enemies.

But I must have liberty to say, as these Men by the Prophet do, Chap. 1. 18. *The Lord is righteous, for we have rebelled against him*; in what instances, our Consciences will tell us; and to what heights, we should soon hear, might our own Minds speak. If we were equal in Judgments to that City, for which this *Lamentation* was penn'd, it is certain we have equalled it in sinning; nay, if we had exceeded her in suffering, it had been but just, for we have exceeded her sins, and (to borrow the propheticall Emblem) if she were *Abolab*, we have been *Abolibab*, and not only transcribed, but exceeded her Fornications.

If the fire kindled upon us, and prevailed, it was because we had prepared Combustibles for it, to consume and feed on. It was our Sins that oyled the Flames, and first kindled the raging Consumer.

It



It was our Wickedness, that more than the preceding Drought, made us fit for burning; and it was want of penitent Tears, more than of Water, that render'd it unquenchable. If the Stones were calcined in our Walls, and the Beams consumed to powder, it was because these had cryed each to other, as unable to support the Load of our Frauds and Violences: And if the Almighty thunder'd against us in Flames, it was our Exorbitances that had created Clouds for those Thunders to breed in.

If our Habitations tumbled to the Earth, it was because our Sins had clamor'd up to Heaven; and if God fought against us in Flames of Fire, it was because we had engaged before in a daring and impious *Theomachie*.

If our Temples were made Habitations for Owls, it was because we had made them Dens of Thieves. If our Streets were made lurking places for Robbers, it was because we had filled them before with Violence. If the Prophets were not

to be seen amongst us, it was because we had poured contempt upon them: And if the Elders sat no more in our Gates, it was because those Gates had been corrupted with Injustice.

If our great Conventions and Halls were not, it was but to impose a Fast for their former Plethories. And, in a word, if our City was made a fiery Oven, it was because we had contracted Dross, from which we needed a refining. If God had punished to the height of our Demerits, we had not been here now, either to complain of his Severity, or to praise his Mercy.

But I pass from this Theme also, only with this Request; That we soberly consider both these things, and entertain in our Thoughts a constant Memory of them. Which to what excellent purposes it may conduce, is the

III. Third thing proposed to intimate. You have raised up a Monument to be a lasting Remembrancer of this Judgment, and you have instituted this Day to be a Comment upon it. I

I do not stay to tell you, how in this you are presided by the Practice of all sober Nations, who have not thought it fit, that extraordinary Accidents should be over-run with Oblivion, and buried in the common Crowd of Things; and therefore in order to the preventing that, have signalized them with some extraordinary Remarks, set aside some Time for their stated Remembrance, and raised Monuments and Pillars to perpetuate that Remembrance to succeeding Ages.

But I would rather intimate to what excellent Purposes this Memory may serve us. I shall mention these four:

I. To make us live in a constant fear of God, and his Judgments.

II. In a sense of our own great Mutability, and the uncertainty of these Enjoyments.

III. To excite our care and watchfulness against any Parties of Men, that have been Instruments in such Judgments, and are ready to be so again.

IV. Ec

IV. Especially to excite our care and indignation against those Sins of our own, that may so again incense God, as to permit them to be so.

I. To make us live in an awe of God, and his terrible Judgments, than which there are not many rarer Instruments of Virtue, or more effectual to restrain Vice.

Who would not fear thee, ô thou King of Nations, that considers thy Greatness, but who can chuse but do so, that sees thy Judgments, and such terrible Specimens of thy Power and Wrath!

I do not doubt, but the sight of the Judgment wrought such awful apprehensions of God, when it was present; and to Men, in any measure instructed in Religion, it was almost impossible but that it should: And therefore I recommend the steady Memory of it, in order to the perpetuating the same good effect; for if Men continue the one, they can scarce miss to feel the other.

What just cause have all of us to tremble before the God of the whole Earth,  
who

who can so easily bring down the Strength of ungodly Nations, and can look the strongest Cities into confusion! *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments, cryeth David, Psal. 119. 120.* And certainly they that have seen such dreadful Instances of these Judgments, cannot but do so.

II. Especially if (secondly) they consider, That they are still subject to the same, and in reach of them: And there are not many Meditations more effective of humility, and destructive to presumption, and pride, and confidence, than this.

It was the great Folly, as well as Sin, of Jerusalem, to dwell carelessly and securely, to say, *none was besides her, she should not sit as a Widow, nor know the loss of Children, as God chargeth her to do, Isa. 47. 8. i. e. to glory in her strength, and to think her self impregnable: And God let her therefore see the folly of her pride, and vanity of her confidence.*

And the truth is, most great Cities are



apt to fall into the same folly, to glory in their Walls, or the Strength of their Inhabitants, in the Multitude of their People, or in the greatness of their Riches; as if these were Fences against Miseries, and Amulets against Destruction.

Against which Vanity and Danger, it were well, for such to continue the Memory of any Judgments that have befallen others, but much more such as have befallen themselves.

It was thought enough to awaken and humble proud *Jerusalem*, to bid her (as the Prophet doth *Amos 6. 2.*) *pass now to Calneh and see, and from thence go to Hamath the great, then go down to Gath of the Philistins, be they better than those Kingdoms! or their Border greater than these Nations?*

Another Prophet thought he said enough to startle proud *Nineveh*, by telling her (as he did *Nab. 3. 8, 9.*) That she should consider, whether she were better than populous *No*, that was situate among the Rivers, and had the Water round about it, whose Rampart was the Sea, and her wall from the Sea;  
Ethiopia

[ 12 ]  
*Ethiopia and Egypt were her Strength, and  
it was infinite, Put and Lubin were her Helpers,  
and yet she went into Captivity.*

And those that see the strongest Cities  
subject to the same Destructions, and  
dance the same Fate before them, have  
little reason to exempt themselves from  
it, or to think it impossible. But then  
certainly those have much less reason to  
think so, that consider they themselves  
formerly have known what Misery  
meant. What befalls others, may befall  
them too; but what befalls them at one  
time, may do so at another as well. The  
things that have been, may be again,  
and he that hath been taught to know  
what it is to suffer, hath little reason to  
magnifie her self against all future possi-  
bility of it.

III. Another End, not unprofitable  
for us (perhaps) in this Matter, may be  
to excite our *Care* and *Watchfulness* against  
those Men, that were instrumental in  
inflicting upon us this Destruction, and  
yet may be ready to repeat the same.

D

My



My Brethren, I am not one (I thank God) that is apt to entertain hard thoughts of any Men, much less that take pleasure in reflecting on them: And I plainly confess to you, I think it would have been next to impossible, to have induced me to believe, That Men professing *Christian Religion*, should ever have a hand in such a thing; were I not convinced by their Doctrines, and some subsequent Practices of the possibility of it.

It is certainly hard for any Man, that hath not shaken off all Remains of Religion, and Humanity too, to think it possible for Men to be so debauched in the one, or so wholly to have abandoned the other, as purposely to inflict such *barbarous Cruelties* upon their Fellow Brethren, and Fellow Christians. But sad Experience hath taught us, That these things are possible to some Men, and warranted by their very Religion to be *Virtues and Merits*.

But therefore I think these *Doctrines* and

and consonant *Practices*, condemnation enough of that Religion, and sufficient warrants for all, that either love their Souls, or their Safety, to be *watchful* against all those that are bigotted into a mad Zeal for it.

Those Men that can Fire Cities, and dance in the Light of their Flames, are (I am sure) far enough from the Spirit of J E S U S, whose *Name* they usurp, and had better derive themselves from *Nero*, that Monster of Men, or incarnate Devil.

But I would not be accounted severe to any. If these things were but *accidental Miscarriages*, and not the *natural Issues* of some Mens *Principles*: Or were not we (I do not know for what reason) sliding insensibly into a good Opinion and Belief of their Innocency, ready to acquit them from their Crimes, and to think kindly of them; I had wholly waved this reflective Period.

But since it is quite otherwise, I think it not amiss, nor very excentrick to my Duty, to give a Caution against them,

and only say, if we warn that Viper again, in that Bosom, which it hath formerly several times so dangerously wounded, we become Accessaries to our own Ruin, and must be pitied only with that compassion, that belongs to silly and incredulous Fools.

I am for Mercy and Compassion, Kindness and Charity to all, but I do not know how to commend it then, when it shall be made advantage of to effect our own Ruin.

IV. But fourthly, I have greater Enemies to caution against, and more dangerous; for wicked Men could have no advantage against us, did not we our selves give it them; nor would God permit this Sword of his to wound us, did not we by our Sins incense and provoke him to do so. It is these that put the Sword into our Enemies Hand, and it is these that armevil Men against us.

And certainly when God not only threatens, but lets us actually feel the sad and bitter Effects of these, we have  
mighty

mighty great Arguments against them, and shall make a sad Use of God's Methods, and our own Experiences, if yet we retain a Kindness for them.

It was our Saviours advice to the Man recovered from his sad Infirmary, *Joh. 5. 14. Go, and Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee*; and it was mighty proper, and like to take effect: For they that have felt by a true Experience, what an evil and bitter thing it is, to *sin against God*, one would think were in a fair way to conversion; but they that severely suffer for their Sins, and yet go and sin again, their Salvation is next to impossible.

And methinks these things might easily be applied to us, and our present Circumstances.

That our former Sins have occasioned that Punishment, which we come now to remember, we have been told, and (would we believe our own selves) might be assured. May we not then? nay should we not take heed of that, whose Consequences we have experienced to be so tremendous? If

If we would have the same Judgment repeated, we know the Method, and may pursue it; but certainly, if we be wise, shall not do so. If we dread the one, we ought to hate the other: If we deprecate the like Punishment, we ought to abominate that which caused it. If we execrate the Instruments that immediately inflicted the Destruction, sure we ought to do so too, to those Sins that enabled them to do so.

And if we lament our Sins, and bewail our Misery this Day, to any real *Purposes of Religion, or Acceptance*, this will be the *Effect* of so doing; without which, this Day, and the Service of it, will be but Pageantry and Hypocrisie, which will *expose* us to God's Fury, and not *entitle* us to his Mercy; cause us to fear we shall be consumed, instead of praising him that we are not; as we now may, as the

*Second General* of the Text intimates to us. I confess this is not so pertinent to the Design of this Day, but (blessed be God) it is proper for us; and therefore I shall for a Close consider it. Three



Three Things I have proposed on this Head, and I beg patience while I speak to them: The Theme is grateful, and I hope we shall not grow weary to hear our own Blessings.

I. The first is to consider our *Rescue* from these Flames, *we are not consumed*; and (blessed be God) we can speak it upon better Reasons, than the Prophet in the Text could.

That *we are not consumed*, our own happy Experiences tell us, and this Religious Convention effectually attests. We are yet alive to praise God, as I hope we shall this Day.

But this is too little for us to say: It is too mean a Recognition to say, *we are not consumed*; we can say also, *we are happily recovered*; not only escaped from Death, but restored to the happy strength and vigour of our former *Life*. Our City is recovered to its former Grandeur; nay (as it commonly happens in Resurrections) to greater Glory. No Man that hath seen our former Temples, needs to weep.

weep now upon the sight of our *latter* ; nor lament, that our present *Emporium* is short of the first : For our Buildings are risen to a more glorious Pile, and our City to a much more beautiful Frame than formerly. And we need not be told this ; we see it daily, and it is equally our *wonder* and our *joy*.

It will be a more seasonable Consideration, to impress our Thoughts with the Author of this blessed Preservation, that we may pay him suitable Recognitions for it, and that is plainly enough intimated in the Text to be the Lord, *it is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not consumed*.

I. That God is indeed the *Author* of such signal Preservations, as ours, and this Peoples too were, is a Truth so very evident upon the Principles of Natural Religion, that I must not be so rude, as to go about gaining a Belief of it in this Audience.

All Men that have any Belief of the *Being* of God, or his Providence in Governing the World, or that have any  
sense



sense of Religion, and the Reasons of it, cannot but have entertained a Belief of this Truth.

If we believe a God, we must believe him to be the first great Cause, which doth influence and move all the rest, which neither can act without him, nor contrary to his determination. So that he that admits the fatal Chain, and lays a necessary Train of Causes for all things that are, must either drive that Chain to its first Original, or he speaks nonsense, and doth not understand his own *Hypothesis*.

And if we believe Divine Providence to superintend and order the Affairs of the World, we must acknowledge this upon that Reason too.

I do not go to prove the *Being* of Providence in this place, nor to give Reputation to that idle *Epicurean* Fancy, upon which a *Mistrust* of this is founded, by confuting of it. It is founded upon a gross Mistake of God, and degrading him to the Imperfections of Man, who

E because

because he cannot without Trouble mind many things at once,therefor God cannot.

To us, clear testimony of this is given, by him that cannot err, nor deceive; and if a Sparrow fall not to the ground, without our heavenly Father, certainly such grand Occurrences do not happen,without his Government.

And he that understands the *Reasons* of his own Religion, will not need to be contended with about this matter. Religion teacheth all Men to look upon God, as the prime Origin of all Things, and *Prayer* and *Praise* are the two principal Services of it; and we therefore pray to God for Mercies that we want, and praise him for those we enjoy, because we believe they issue from him, and are disposed by him.

These things are equally argumentative in all Cases; but there are some, that carry their own Convictions with them, had Men no great sense of Religion, to induce them to a consonant belief.

Some

Sometimes *Rescues from Evils* carry such clear Signatures of *Divine Efficiency* upon them, that no Man can well be unobservant thereof, but be strongly prompted to confess with the Egyptian Sorcerers (in another case) *This is indeed the Finger and Power of God.*

And truly I know not, why I may not entitle this so to him, upon these two accounts:

I. In respect of the then present *Deliverance* from this Consumption. For my part, I have often thought, I could see as clear Signatures of God's *merciful Interposition*, in stopping the Fire, as *Traces* of his *Anger* in the progress of it. I know not, but the *one* had evil Instruments to promote it; but I am sure, the *other* in some places had none to obstruct it.

And as if God purposely intended to remark his Mercy in it, you may yet see, it stopped in places, where one would not only judge it *unlikely*, but next to *impossible* it should do so; among

rotten, dry, weak Buildings, which should rather invite a Flame, than give check to it.

But so *Mercy* recovered its Empire over *Justice*, and it pitied the Almighty to triumph in farther Executions: His Compassions said *it was enough*, and fixed Bounds to the proud Flames; and signalized themselves as much in the *Rescue*, as *Justice* had before in the *Execution*.

II. In respect of the sudden *Recovery* and *Rebuilding* of the City again. He that in the midst of such Desolations and Ruins, should have predicted the *Restoration* of this City, to that Glory it is now in, in *seven years* time; would hardly have escaped the Censure of a false Prophet, but been thought to tell things as far exceeding Belief and Hope, as *Ezekiel* did, when he prophesied *Life to dry Bones*.

And for this I dare appeal to the sober sense of all that hear me, among whom (I am very confident) few ever hoped to live, to see half of that perfection

fection, which we now for a great while have been joyful Spectators of.

But so God inspired Men with Zeal and Industry, and blessed their Labour to almost incredible measures; and henceforth the Men of this City must appear Men of great Spirits, to whom nothing is impossible, nothing difficult, especially when God saith *Amen* to their Resolutions.

But I must not forget to let you know (in the midst of these Blessings) what *moved* God to effect them; the Text tells us clearly his *Mercy*, nay *Mercies* in the plural, nay his *bowel*, *tender Mercies*, as the Original imports.

And I would fain know, what can be set up in competition with it: Alas how *vain*, how *groundless*, how much their own *confutation*, and *shame*, are all those Thoughts, that shall make God a Debtor to Man, and enable Man upon any Merit in him-  
self

self to challeng Blessings from him.

I have been always apt to believe, and yet am, That those that stand upon Terms with God have least reason to do so; and those furthest from meriting any thing at his hands, that pretend a possibility of doing so. I never yet saw or heard any, that when it came to the Test, durst stand to it. *Tutissimum est* saith the

great Advocate for it; *It is safest to renounce our own, and relie on Christ's Merits.*

And All Men when they come to dye, do so too. And I think that an ill Doctrine to maintain in Life, that all Men renounce and flie from at Death.

God knows, and he that best knows hath told us, That Man at his best state is altogether Vanity, and at his worst is a Lye, and much worse. His Righteousness is so very little, that it can claim no Blessing; and his Wick- edness so very great, that it deserves nothing but Cursing. And how im-

proper



proper and unbecoming it is, for such a thing to strut it out, and Stand upon Terms with God, judge ye.

But, my Brethren, let other Men talk at what vain Rates they will, I am sure we have enough to reduce us to *humility* and *shame*; and that is, by reflecting upon the *Sins* and *Debaucheries* of this Generation. I pointed at this before, and therefore shall not now cloy you with ungrateful Reputations.

I only beg as the Prophet doth, *verse 40. of this Chapter, Let us search and try our ways*; and if we do, we shall not need any other Method to preserve us from Vanity. We shall soon find enough to *humble*, rather than *exalt* us.

The only difficulty upon this Search will be, to resolve whether our Sins have not surmounted God's Mercies, and whether we have not confronted the Miracles of Divine Kindness, with almost

almost as great Miracles of our own  
Unworthiness.

Do you thus requite the Lord, O  
foolish People, and unwise! And  
dost thou, O Lord, work Deliverances  
for such! Both these are equally  
strange, equally surprising: Let the  
one be matter of our Humility, and  
the other the magnifying of thy Mercy.  
*Not unto as O Lord; not unto us, but unto  
thy Name be the praise, for thy Truth, and  
for thy Mercies sake.*

*Let the People praise thee, O God; Let all  
the People praise thee! O let the whole  
Nation extoll and magnifie thee! Let  
them say alway, Blessed be the Lord,  
who hath pleasure in the prosperity of his Ser-  
vants; who hath not punished us as we deserved,  
but in his Judgment remembered his Mercy,  
and saved us for his Mercy and Compassion's  
sake.*

But I have one thing more yet,  
for which to entitle God and his  
Mercy to our preservation, and that  
is, the implacable Rage and Malice of  
our

our Enemies against us. Of this we have fresh and daily Evidences, and (by the way) I do not know, but we may be obliged to them for it. They pull off their Vizard, and by this tell us what they are, and what we are to expect; and to whom also to fly for protection from them.

When Disappointments do but the more enrage them; when to be defeated in one *bellish* Project, makes them more earnest in *another*; when nothing will reconcile them, nothing discourage them; we have just cause to say, *It is of God that we are not consumed*; to report in earnest that of the Psalmist, *Unless God keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain*: And but that he hath done the first, all care of the other had been to no purpose.

III. And now I have but one thing more to enquire about, but it is a very material and important one, *I. e.* How these Mercies may be secured to us? And how these Compassions, that

have been hitherto extended to us, *may*  
*not fail?*

An Enquiry, which it is so much  
 the more needful to have Resolution  
 in, by how much we are subject to the  
 same *Consumptions* still, and have the same  
*wicked Men* as industrious to bring them  
 upon us as ever, and must be preserved  
 by the same *Compassions* and *Mercies*,  
 if we be preserved.

The Designs of *Sixty Six* are yet pursued, and its *barbarous Intendments* prosecuted as eagerly as ever: The same Reason which incited the Cruelty then, continues visible still.

It is this *CITY*, next to God, and his Vicegerents Safety and Care, that supports the Interest of this *Kingdom* and *Church*: While this is safe and flourishing in conjunction with its *KING*, all the Attempts of *Darkness* (supposing Gods *common Providence*) will be their own Confusions.

This our Enemies seem to see clearly, and you may perceive their Designs have

have been accordingly, Either to *destroy* the CITY, or to *take away the Life of the* KING, would put their hopes into fair possibilities; but to do both, would certainly assure them: And therefore each have been singly, and both in conjunction, in *aim and project*.

*Delenda est Carthago*, was Romes great Maxim of Policy of old, and it is the same still, only changing the Scene. So that we as much need the same Compassions and Mercies to protect us now as ever; and therefore no Enquiry can be more really concerning, than how *these may be assured to us still*.

Which Enquiry I do not know how more safely and effectually to resolve, than in these Two Directions:

I. Be we sure to be duly thankful for the Mercies that we have already received. The Persons or People that are so, almost lay an obligation upon God to confer more.

Consult your own Breasts, you will find your Charity still moves by this



Rule; and consult the Holy Scriptures, and you shall find that God's moves also by the same. But above all things be we sure to add holiness to our praises, to live holy and christian Lives, to avoid those Sins, that provoke God's Indignation and Wrath against a People, and to practice those Graces, which entitle them to Divine Protection and Favour.

To come out of the Fire refined from our former Sins, and to permit our Flames to consume our Dross. By this we shall comply with God's great Design in them, and prevent all need of a further refining. If by this, the Iniquity of Jacob be purged, the Fire shall be kindled against it no more.

Let the living Temples exceed the former in purity, as much as the material ones surpass them in beauty; the Inhabitants be as much better, as their Habitations are more glorious; and their Zeal for God, Care of his Religion, Concern for his Honour, Obedience



to his Commands, be intended and heightned by these great Obligations.

This would render us dear, and beloved of God: This would cause *his Angels* to encamp about us, and the *Divine Presence* to dwell among us: This would make God our *Sun* and our *Shield*; and entitle us to his  *blessing*, and *protection* too.

For Holiness is God's own Nature and Being, and can no more be separated from his regards and Care, than a Sun-beam can be cut off from its Original, and cast into Hell.

Upon these terms, we may commit our selves and our safetie unto God, and need not doubt the success. We may assure our selves, that as his *Mercies* have been manifested to us, so they will; and that as his *Compassions* hitherto have not, so for the future *they never will fail*. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, for his Son *Jesus Christ's* sake. *Amen.*

F I N I S.